An Impact Assessment of the OTI-funded Anti-Corruption Program in Lebanon

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I. INTRODUCTION

From March 6 to 16, 2001 a two-person team from OTI/Washington went to Lebanon to evaluate the impact of OTI's anti-corruption program. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Identify the impacts that resulted from the three programs and determine OTI's value-added;
- Generate lessons learned and recommendations for working in countries where OTI is unable to maintain an office or field its own staff;
- Generate lessons learned and recommendations for future anti-corruption activities that OTI may initiate; and,
- Define the parameters for the small grants program that will be implemented by Amideast.

Over the course of the assessment, the team met with over thirty individuals from the USAID Mission, implementing partner organizations, and local NGOs. Using semi-structured interviews, the team attempted to define the value-added of OTI's Lebanon program and to identify trends in anti-corruption activities that have taken place since 1997. While the team did not gather quantitative data to support their findings—this was within the purview of Information International's post-media campaign research—it has been able to qualitatively identify the major impacts stemming from the OTI-funded activities.

II. CHRONOLOGY OF THE OTI-FUNDED PROGRAM

In March 1999, at the request of USAID/Lebanon Mission Director James (Spike) Stephenson, a USAID/Washington team conducted an anti-corruption assessment in Lebanon. The team recommended implementation of the following activities:

1. Municipality Assistance
- computerization of municipalities
- training for municipal leaders in transparency and accountability issues
- establishment of a national municipal association
- privatization of the Beirut municipality slaughterhouse
- professionalization of Beirut municipality's civil service

2. Media
- media campaign on the direct impact of corruption
- training investigative journalists and editors

3. Public-Private Partnerships competitive small grants program

Following the assessment, OTI recommended funding an 18 month three-pronged, $2.2 million program to include all of the team's recommendations.

The original assessment team recognized the imminent risk that Lebanon's pandemic corruption posed to its economy. They saw that corruption inhabited every level of society and that it exacerbated the feudal system of governance that has evolved in Lebanon. In the context of the 1998 municipal elections, President Lahoud's personal pledge to continue his campaign against corruption, and the strong support among the Lebanese people for an anti-corruption movement, the assessment team recommended that USAID commence an anti-corruption initiative in Lebanon. The assessment team's objective was to light a match that would spark a fire among the Lebanese to prompt them to undertake concrete anti-corruption initiatives.

In March 2001, at the time of the impact assessment, the joint Mission and OTI anti-corruption assistance programs included four components. The municipality assistance program ultimately included computerization and training for municipality employees in Beirut and Jounieh municipalities, and should be completed by mid-2001. The media campaign was completed in 2000 and OTI has baseline and two benchmark polls to measure results. The investigative training for the journalists program conducted its first round of training in Lebanon in early 2000 and brought 12 participants to the U.S. for training in November and December 2000. The International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) has just begun its second and last round of in-country training that will end in May 2001. The public-private partnerships competitive grants program evolved into a Transparency and Accountability Grants program. This program will run from March 2001 to March 2002, and is expected to make its first grants in May 2001.

III. POLITICAL OVERVIEW

Lebanon is a parliamentary republic in which, based on the unwritten 'National Pact of 1943,' the President is a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister is a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies is a Shi'a Muslim. With broad public support, despite criticism of Syria's role in influencing political leaders in the selection of a president, Emile Lahoud was elected President and took office in November 1998. In 1999 municipal elections were held for the first time in almost forty years. Observers declared these elections to be generally free and fair, but noted a number of irregularities. In May 2000, after 22 years of occupation, the Israeli Defense Force troops withdrew from the south and West Biqa' and the South Lebanon Army (SLA) disbanded. Following the withdrawal, the Government of Lebanon deployed over 1,000 police and soldiers to the former security zone. Parliamentary elections were held in August and September 2000. They were, however, seriously flawed. The Syrian Government heavily influenced the electoral law governing the process and pre-approved all candidate slates. Security officials promoted relatives and political allies, and government officials supervised voting. Lebanon's economic landscape has been marred by deepening recession, unemployment estimated at twenty percent, and a drop in foreign investments by thirteen percent.[1]

[1] The U.S. Department of State, "Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Lebanon." Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. February 2001.

> Commenting on the pervasiveness of corruption in Lebanese systems, "We need to take a collective bath. Mud is the creation of a process. For forty years we bypassed the system." – Editor of the Daily Star

Over the past fifty years, corruption had become institutionalized in Lebanon and an accepted means of conducting business. In 1999, OTI funded Information International to conduct research and prepare a report on the history of corruption in Lebanon. The report, "Lebanon Anti-Corruption Initiative Report," defines corruption, traces corruption in Lebanon from Ottoman rule to the present, and calculates the cost of corruption to the Lebanese economy. The report notes, "the impact of approximately 15 years of war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990 inevitably resulted in a moral slackness and the loosening of social values which further accelerated corruption. The post-war co-habitation governments included former militia leaders whose mission was to help the government from within to dismantle and to reinstall the governmental and administrative institutions. This situation lasted for approximately nine years, during which attempts to clean the Administration proved to be unsuccessful."[2] Today, Lebanon in general and the Administration in particular are still suffering from the negative impact of war.

Further highlights of Information International's report note:

- According to the polls, around one-quarter of the population consider "the whole state" as the most corrupt entity in the Lebanese society. People are dissatisfied with the political system, namely the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government and public administration.
- Confirming and reiterating public denunciation of the pervasive corruption in Lebanon, an additional 21.4% of the population consider that "all politicians" are corrupt or that politicians are the most corrupt segment in Lebanese society. In naming the most corrupt segments, 14% of the population considers Ministers, 10.3% Members of Parliament, and 9.5% public employees or heads of various state administrative departments.
- 45% of the current Lebanese Parliament is made up of political oligarchy and 33% of their affiliates or allies.
- Lebanese presidents and prime ministers since independence in 1943 have pledged to abolish sectarianism, reform government institutions, purge corruption and achieve national unity. Those efforts were undermined, however, by many national, regional and international conditions, leading to a vicious cycle of violence.

[2] "Lebanon Anti-Corruption Initiative Report: 1999." Information International. Beirut, Lebanon.

IV. THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN

A. Program Description

Beginning in May 1999, OTI sought to jumpstart its anti-corruption program in Lebanon through a media campaign designed to illuminate the costs of corruption to the Lebanese people. Rather than sponsoring an American effort, OTI gathered a group of prominent Lebanese citizens to conceptualize and present the campaign. The goal was to replicate OTI's success the group it formed in Indonesia, Visa Anak Bangsa, and to spotlight corruption following President Lahoud's inaugural speech in late 1998.

The consultative group included prominent citizens and NGO members, and took the name Kulluna Massoul (We Are All Responsible). During the conceptualization process, members feared that they would face repercussions once the anti-corruption campaign became public. Nevertheless, towards the end of the first phase of the campaign, the members held a press conference to inform the Lebanese public of the upcoming anti-corruption campaign.

The members of Kulluna Massoul felt that they would have greater protection from personal retribution if they registered as an NGO. Thus, Kulluna Massoul began the registration process in 1999, but as of this writing, has not yet received its registration papers. Although OTI did not intend to create an NGO through this process, Kulluna Massoul is still operating and is currently implementing a transparency and anti-corruption seminar series at the American University of Beirut with a $15,000 grant from OTI.

To provide a factual basis for the campaign, OTI funded a Lebanese research firm, Information International, to research and write a paper on the costs of corruption in Lebanon. Following the presentation of this report, Saatchi & Saatchi, with funding from OTI, began designing the media campaign in August 1999. The theme of the first phase of the campaign, in March and April 2000**,** was that the Lebanese were burying their children's future by accepting corruption. The campaign consisted of television and radio spots, newspaper advertisements, and billboards. The second phase of the campaign, which took place in October and November 2000**,** included another media spot in which college students talked about what corruption means to them and what can be done to stop it.

B. Impact

Media Campaign

The media campaign was a success in that it started citizens talking about corruption openly, and was the first major program and the first public awareness campaign to address the issue in Lebanon. Before the campaign, people did not talk openly and publicly about corruption. As one interviewee noted, it was a "ball that politicians threw to one another and was a stick used by the President, Prime Minister, and the Speaker of

the House for mud-slinging." The campaign was credited with taking the issue out of the political realm and bringing it to the citizens. The evaluation team cannot directly link the media campaign with the macro political changes that were taking place within Lebanon, however, when interviewees were asked what the impact of the campaign was, they made the following observations.

> "The campaign put corruption on the map as a current viable subject to talk about. It is now not so alien to say that we need to work on corruption. That was not the case before. Now it is on the agenda."
> Jamil Mroue, Editor of the Daily Star

> "USAID had the guts to start something, which helped us continue. External entities [USAID] started this campaign and gave it legitimacy"
> UN official in Lebanon

> "The campaign was a major landmark and a first for Lebanon."
> Director of Information International

> "The campaign ignited something. I do not know how much it will stretch, or where it will go."
> Nabil Mufarrij, Saatchi and Saatchi

> "The campaign changed our lives and the way we think about corruption."
> Kulluna Massoul executive board member

> "After people joined, they started talking about corruption in their communities. It became normal chat among people."
> Kulluna Massoul executive board member

> "I didn't see any concrete action or follow-up to the campaign. People were not referring to it. But you have to start somewhere."
> UN Official in Lebanon

> "At the grassroots level, they believed in the campaign. They got the message."
> UN Official in Lebanon

The UN highlighted one negative impact of the campaign. They noted that because OTI had paid media outlets to air the Kulluna Massoul campaign, a precedent for paid public service announcements has been set among media outlets. This had a negative impact on the UN's ability to receive donated airtime for its upcoming campaign.

Kulluna Massoul

OTI never intended to create an NGO. The fact that Kulluna Massoul was established as a local NGO and that it has continued its work on anti-corruption initiatives is a very

positive, yet unintended, outcome of the Mission-OTI program. Despite the organization's capacity building needs and friction with the one other existing anti-corruption NGO, La Fasad, Kulluna Massoul should be viewed as a valuable addition to Lebanese civil society. Although the organization is still clearly searching for resources and a long-term vision, it has grown to include over two hundred volunteers—demonstrating that there is a growing base of individuals eager to begin tackling corruption. A member of Kulluna Massoul made the following observation:

> "There was a trend for reform. We are the first Lebanese NGO who wants to achieve anti-corruption. As a result, there is an increase in the number of people who want to volunteer with Kulluna Massoul. Every day we have more people coming in to volunteer."

Information International

"The Anti-Corruption Initiative Report: 1999," prepared by Information International, was the first document to define corruption and to calculate the cost of corruption in Lebanon. Information International is a sophisticated organization with a strong social research capacity. More than a year after the dissemination of the USAID report, the UN contracted with Information International to prepare another report on corruption as part of the UN Global Program Against Corruption. The UN report, which Information International recently completed, was based largely on the definitions and information gained in the researching and writing of the OTI-funded document. Because the UN respected USAID's selection process, they felt that Information International had passed a certain test and were more comfortable contracting with them. Thus, while the Mission-OTI program cannot claim to have had an impact on Informational International, it has increased the firm's legitimacy and standing among Lebanon's international donor community and has paved the way for Information International to negotiate future contracts with other donors.

C. Lessons Learned

> "We [USAID and the UN] are both in a learning process—learning from what has happened with the campaign. I am convinced that we [the international community] had to start this [anti-corruption] initiative."
> UN Official in Lebanon

The media campaign was a success in that it started citizens talking about corruption openly, and was the first major program and the first public awareness campaign to address the issue in Lebanon. Before the campaign, people did not talk openly and publicly about corruption. However, a lesson learned is that unless the media campaign is surrounding a major event, or it OTI plans follow up actions, impact of the media campaign will be lost.

According to Ghassan Emile Moukheiber, a former member of Kulluna Massoul and a current member of La Fasad ("No Corruption"), "the campaign concentrated awareness

into buzz words – but didn't offer any follow up." This appears to be the general consensus among the individuals with whom the evaluation team spoke. The campaign succeeded in creating awareness and educating the citizens, but did not move to the next step—providing a concrete plan of action for citizens to fight corruption. Many interviewees reported that they felt let down and frustrated once the media campaign ended.

The campaign was an appropriate OTI activity, but because Lebanon was not experiencing a significant political transition, there was no major event—an election or referendum—around which the campaign could be based. The lack of an event, coupled with the lack of a response mechanism for citizen action, stunted the ability of the campaign to achieve greater impact.

In the future, OTI should either plan a media campaign *around* a significant event, or ensure that a campaign produces awareness *and* a means for encouraging citizen action. In this case, OTI did design a follow up program in the form of a small Transparency and Accountability Grants program (see page 13). Unfortunately, competing funding priorities in OTI Washington resulted in OTI's inability to fund the grants program in time for it to follow the media campaign.

Recognizing that the OTI-funded media campaign lacked follow-up, the UN reported that it has based its own upcoming campaign to coincide with the release of the National Integrity Steering Committee's (NISC) Action Plan, expected to be completed in four to six months.

A number of interviewees noted that the campaign did not have a long enough timeframe. From OTI's perspective, the media campaign was only designed to meet short-term needs with the hope that Lebanese citizens would take their own steps to fight corruption. OTI's model of providing short-term assistance in transition countries may not have been as appropriate for a non-transition environment such as Lebanon, where anti-corruption activities should be part of a sustainable long-term development strategy. In the future, OTI might consider funding a short-term anti-corruption initiative that is based within a Mission's long-term anti-corruption strategy.

V. MUNICIPALITY ASSISTANCE

A. Description

The State University of New York (SUNY) program works across Lebanon to streamline operations and computerize the collection of revenues. The goal is to create a 'one-stop shop' for reducing the number of interactions between citizens and municipal officials, thereby reducing the opportunity for corruption. Citizens receive information on the documents that they must provide in order to complete transactions, the money required for each document, and the length of time needed to complete each transaction.

The State University of New York (SUNY) program:

- enhances municipal administrative capabilities;
- reviews the municipal payroll process;
- develops and trains staff to use, a payroll system to track salaries, rewards, penalties, holidays, and taxes of municipal employees;
- enhances municipal financial capabilities;
- introduces information technology into municipal processes; and
- enhances citizen participation.

OTI's municipality assistance program involved the commitment of funds to expand the Mission's ongoing program with to the SUNY. Before OTI's participation, the Mission had been able to target 78 municipalities. With the additional funding provided by OTI, the Mission expanded the program to include Beirut, the capital, and Jounieh, Lebanon's wealthiest municipality. The SUNY program was initiated following the 1998 municipal elections, in which municipal officials were elected for the first time in almost forty years.

B. Impact

> "I can now do in seconds what used to take me days!"
> - Jounieh municipality citizen waiting in line

The SUNY program has had a tangible and positive impact. Citizens interviewed for this evaluation expressed great satisfaction in having changed from a system where they once received few instructions and were forced to return endlessly to the municipality to complete their transactions, to one where there are clear and streamlined procedures. They also expressed pleasure at having the costs and processing times for each transaction publicly noted. In the bigger picture, the program has resulted in a streamlined processes that makes it more difficult for municipal employees to accept bribes.

In the process of implementing the computerized document tracking system, Jounieh municipality uncovered a conspiracy between three municipal employees. The officials allegedly collected taxes from citizens, gave them falsified receipts, and recorded false numbers in the municipal documents. It is estimated that they stole approximately $250,000 from the municipality. The former employees are currently in jail awaiting trial. That the fraud was uncovered can be directly attributed to the work of the SUNY program.

> With the SUNY program, "signatures are cut by one half. In the old system, an individual needed to gather an average of 76 signatures that took an average of two years. Now, citizens can obtain the required signatures in two weeks, or so."
> Beirut municipal council member
>
> "Municipal workers were new to these types of systems, management, and the laws. With SUNY's help, the computerization of the municipality's revenue systems has increased revenue."
> Jounieh municipal council member

Jounieh has also been able to increase its tax revenues. The computerized system generates the taxpayer list and specifies how much each citizen owes and whether or not the citizen has paid the taxes. These changes resulted in an increase of tax revenue in Jounieh municipality from $25,000 in 2000 to $150,000 expected in 2001.

The Mission-OTI funded SUNY program has encouraged the municipalities to design their own initiatives. One council member noted, "now that most things have been done, there is the environment to work on new innovations." For example, Jounieh municipality is preparing to invite community leaders to participate in the municipal decision-making process. Similarly, Jounieh, with encouragement from SUNY, plans to finance the publication of newsletters to update the public on the new initiatives taking place within the municipality.

According to Jounieh and Halba municipal workers interviewed for this evaluation, the program will be sustainable once SUNY's involvement in the program ends. They believe that once the computerization process is completed and transactions are streamlined, the process will have taken hold and it would be difficult for municipalities to revert to the old systems.

The potential for further impact is great. In response to seeing the new system in Jounieh, the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Municipalities have expressed interest in expanding the SUNY program to all municipalities in Lebanon. The Ministers hope to use funding from the UN and USAID to expand the SUNY program.

The SUNY program is an excellent example of synergy between the Mission and OTI. The program itself was too large and too long-term for OTI to consider funding on its own. Since the Mission had already funded the program for 78 municipalities, OTI could add funding to cover Beirut and Jounieh. Beirut is a larger, much more complex municipality than others the Mission is assisting. The Jounieh initiative has since become a model program and has led to the possibility of the Ministries working with the Mission to expand the program nation-wide.

C. Lessons learned

This program created an opportunity to tie the idea of anti-corruption to the very tangible effects of municipal assistance. Whenever possible, OTI should attempt to link its message to an activity that will affect people's daily lives in tangible ways.

D. Recommendations for the Mission

The evaluation team recommends that the Mission and other donors in Lebanon commit more resources to cover more municipalities in the event the Ministers of Interior and Municipalities continue to show their support. Further, it may be beneficial to expand the model to the national government level. A program adapted to the national level could help the Government of Lebanon respond to growing cries for reform from its citizens.

VI. INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM TRAINING

A. Description

OTI funded the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) to conduct two investigative journalism training sessions for newspaper journalists in Lebanon. ICFJ conducted the first session for 70 journalists from January to March 2000. In November 2000 they brought 12 of those journalists to the U.S. for 45 days of training including working visits to U.S. newspapers. In March 2001 ICJF began the second session for 30 journalists in Lebanon.

B. Impact

> "It gave me courage. If you want to do something, you need courage. Alone you can't do anything."
> - U.S. training alumna

While ICFJ did a commendable job of organizing and conducting this training program, the longer-term impact of this effort has been negligible. ICFJ believes that the program can be credited with increasing the pressure on editors to publish anti-corruption articles. ICFJ noted that following the first training a number of newspapers started running long investigative stories. When ICFJ asked, "Why now?" the editors responded that they had been thinking about publishing these types of articles. In addition, it gave some of the trainees a feeling of solidarity with their colleagues that allowed them to venture further into investigative journalism.

However, there are very few examples of journalism training alumni who have published investigate articles. Two journalists who participated in the U.S. portion of the training reported that their editors refused to publish investigative pieces they proposed to write. They further noted that each newspaper has an unwritten policy about the types of articles it will publish. To remedy this, the group of journalists who took part in the U.S.-based training hope to design their own website on which they will publish their anti-corruption articles.

> "There are so many obstacles to investigative journalism. Whether a newspaper wants to publish an investigative journalism article depends on the web surrounding the target of the article." -Hekmat el Zain, training alumnus

It is clear that while the general environment for discussing anti-corruption has opened considerably in Lebanon, the environment for printed investigation is still restricted. Each newspaper exists in a web of relations with political figures, influential people, and religious and family ties. It is not

considered prudent for a newspaper to target someone within its own sphere of influence. One reason for this is that newspaper editors were not included in the training. Another reason is that not enough progress has yet been made in addressing the problems of corruption in Lebanon.

Although the ICFJ program taught the skills necessary to dig for information, access to information remains a major obstacle confronting investigative journalists. Without sunshine laws requiring the government to provide information, the journalists feel it would be very difficult to write the kind of article the training required of them in the period of time their newspapers allowed each day. The Mission and OTI did not find that the U.S. phase of the training added greatly to the overall results.

C. Lessons Learned

Investigative journalism training is more appropriate as part of a media strengthening strategy than it is as a stand-alone intervention. The investigative journalism program was a drop in the bucket that has made a small ripple, but has not yet brought a wave of change to the anti-corruption environment. It is too soon to judge the impact of this training because the media environment in Lebanon does not yet provide an open opportunity for the journalists to use their new skills. A lesson learned is that in order for a training to have impact, it is necessary to have an environment that will allow the trainees to practice their new skills.

The Mission and OTI strongly recommend that any future training of journalists also include training of editors or station managers. Journalists who learn new skills are better able to apply them if their editors have also learned new skills and can provide a supportive environment for the new method of journalism. Further, if editors do not prioritize anti-corruption reporting, anti-corruption articles are less likely to be published.

The participants enjoyed the U.S. program and felt they learned a great deal about how the U.S. political system and U.S. media environment. Many training alumni published articles in their newspapers in Lebanon both about their personal experiences and about the U.S. presidential election. In a key example of policy impact, one journalist, Zeinab Ghosn, used her time in the U.S. to follow up on research she conducted in Lebanon on the regulation of prescription drugs. Upon her return from the U.S., she published an article stating that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had banned a pharmaceutical drug that was sold over-the-counter in Lebanon. Following this article, the Minister of Health ordered the drug pulled from the shelves of Lebanese pharmacies. This is the type of large-scale policy impact that OTI had hoped to achieve through the ICFJ program, but it doesn't go far enough to address the root problems.

E. Recommendations for the Mission

If the Mission were to develop a media strategy, investigative journalism training could be a valuable element. On its own, investigative journalism training is unlikely to be successful. Further, given the high cost of U.S.-based training and the relatively low

impact, the evaluation team does not recommend funding U.S.-based training for investigative journalism in the future.

VII. SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

A. Description

The small grants program was originally envisioned as grants to support public-private partnerships between NGOs and government groups that want to work together to streamline potentially corrupt systems. In an effort to not limit the types of grants possible under this mechanism, OTI and the Mission adapted the program to support Transparency and Accountability Grants. Due to a shortfall in funding during FY 2000, OTI had to postpone funding of this program until FY 2001. The one-year grant was signed with AMIDEAST on March 1, 2001 and provides a total of $500,000 in small grants. Lebanese NGOs and citizen groups may apply for short-term funding to support their fight against corruption. Most grant activities will be completed in a three to six month timeframe, and will range from $5,000 to $20,000.

AMIDEAST intends to start funding grants in May 2001. OTI hopes that this small grants program can serve as a belated, action-oriented follow-up to the media campaign. The greatest outcome would be if the grant recipients were to use these funds to initiate concrete action against corruption in Lebanon.

VIII. OVERALL LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Size of the Budget

FY 1999	$1.1 million
FY 2000	$0.7 million
FY 2001	$1.2 million
Total Budget	$3.0 million

Lesson Learned:
OTI originally committed $2.2 million and eventually provided $3 million in funding over three fiscal years. The Mission thanked OTI for its swift transfer of funds when funds were promised. USAID/Lebanon's contracting office in Jordan enacted all anti-corruption procurement actions. Unfortunately, the Lebanon program suffered from a funding shortfall and competing priorities within OTI in FY 2000. As a result, OTI was not able to provide funds for the Transparency and Accountability small grants program until FY 2001.

Recommendation:
The shortfall caused a delay in implementing the small grants that cost the program more than just time. Had OTI provided the funding in FY 2000, the disbursement of Transparency and Accountability Grants could have coincided with the implementation

of the anti-corruption media campaign. The grants would have provided the response mechanism and follow on action steps that proved to be the missing link of the media campaign. The late funding of this program contributed to lost synergy between the components and a reduction in the potential impact of the overall program. In the future, OTI must recognize that critical programmatic synergy and momentum can be irreparably lost by the late provision of funds.

B. Lebanon as a Non-Presence Country for OTI

Tight security restrictions requiring U.S. Government personnel to remain on the U.S. Embassy compound and a lack of space within USAID/Lebanon, has meant that OTI was unable to place a staff member [US PSC or Direct Hire] in Lebanon. The USAID Mission in Lebanon consists of one Foreign Service Officer – the Mission Director - and three program staff foreign service nationals, who work together in one fully armored trailer on the U.S. Embassy compound. Therefore, OTI relied very heavily on USAID/Lebanon staff to oversee the programmatic and management operations. To augment the Mission's oversight, OTI signed a purchase order with a media expert, Wanda Williams, to carry-out a media campaign over a series of consultancies in Lebanon. OTI/Washington staff also made a number of visits to Lebanon at critical points in the program to oversee activities and provide input.

The Lebanon program has been OTI's only program where staff have not been fielded on a permanent basis. The evaluation team found that the lack of permanent OTI staff has had both positive and negative impacts on the program. Future OTI programs should carefully weigh the two sides before initiating a program where, due to security constraints or threats of violence, OTI cannot field its own personnel.

i) Lesson Learned:
The evaluation team found that OTI's Lebanon program had an extremely high degree of synergy with the USAID Mission—perhaps higher than with any other Mission. This was in large part due to the fact that the Mission had not only originally asked OTI to become involved in Lebanon in December 1998, but had also exercised considerable oversight over the program once it came on-line. The high level of Mission ownership of the OTI program has greatly facilitated the hand-off strategy, and has enabled the Mission to treat the OTI program as an incubator for programs it might eventually pick-up.

i) Recommendation:
Although OTI's Lebanon program is significantly different from other programs in the OTI portfolio, the close relationship and complementary nature of the OTI and Mission program should be replicated as much as possible in other OTI programs to ensure a smooth hand-off.

ii) Lesson Learned:
By not having an OTI staff member based permanently in the country to report and analyze the political environment, OTI staff in Washington did not feel they had a full

grasp of Lebanon's dynamic political situation. As a result, they felt less able to target activities to take advantage of the opportunities and political openings that arose.

ii) Recommendation:
If OTI again chooses to implement a program in a country where it is not possible to place OTI field staff, OTI Washington staff must find a way, through communication with the Mission, the desk officer, or others, to keep their finger on the pulse of the country's political developments. If this is not possible, OTI should either not implement a program in a non-presence country or OTI should let the Mission manage the program from the beginning.

iii) Lesson Learned:
Neither the ICFJ nor the SUNY program components required extensive management or oversight on the part of USAID/Lebanon. The media campaign, on the other hand, became at times the Mission's heaviest management burden. Although OTI hired a media expert to design and implement the media campaign, USAID/Lebanon staff took responsibility for overseeing the campaign's progress every time Ms. Williams left Lebanon. They were responsible for carrying the media campaign process further, and for handing the activity back to Ms. Williams when she returned. Over time, the gaps in activities between Ms. Williams' visits became greater as progress on the campaign moved forward, and USAID/Lebanon was forced to step in and play an even larger management role. It was due to USAID/Lebanon's unwavering support and management, and their belief in the value of an anti-corruption media campaign, that the campaign was successful in its implementation.

iii) Recommendation:
When asked if knowing what they know now, would the Mission would undertake a media campaign of this nature again, they replied that they would, but with a different structure. If OTI does decide to conduct a similar media activity in the future without in-country presence, OTI should make sure that they hire a consultant who will be in-country from the initial design phase of the campaign until progress is well under way, and will return at regularly prescribed intervals for on-going monitoring.

iv) Lesson Learned:
The OTI program in Lebanon was not always considered a high priority within OTI/Washington. This was due to a combination of reasons: the absence of OTI field staff in-country, a relatively small budget compared to other OTI programs, the absence of a clear political transition or opening, other program priorities, and little ownership of the program within OTI at the beginning. As a result, the Lebanon program at times suffered from inattention and the program lost crucial momentum.

iv) Recommendation:
In the future, an OTI non-presence country must be sufficiently prominent on OTI's radar screen to ensure that it receives the programmatic and management oversight needed to successful carry out the activities.

C. Lack of A Significant Political Transition in Lebanon and Criteria for Engagement

One of OTI's primary criteria for deciding to engage in a country is whether or not there is a significant political opening. Usually, OTI defines an opening as the end of a war, the signing of a peace agreement, an election of a country's first democratic leaders, or another significant political event that marks movement towards democracy. The defining moment for OTI's Lebanon program, however, was President Lahoud's inaugural speech in December 1998 in which he set an anti-corruption agenda. As noted in the March 1999 assessment, the rationale for the program states: "It is in the context of the municipal elections, the government's action to date, the President's stated resolve, and the public's strong support for the anti-corruption campaign, that the team recommends that USAID/Lebanon move forward with an anti-corruption program."

i) Lesson Learned:
Not only was there no significant political transition taking place in Lebanon in 1999, but many people with whom the evaluation team spoke noted that President Lahoud's speech did not translate into a concrete anti-corruption action plan. In fact, many interviewees commented that President Lahoud disappointed the Lebanese people by his failure to act, and that his subsequent use of anti-corruption was widely perceived as a power-play with Prime Minister Hariri. As further noted by a number of interviewees, the force behind economic reforms and anti-corruption activities lies more with Prime Minister Hariri than with President Lahoud. Thus the window of opportunity on which OTI sought to capitalize turned out to be much smaller and more fleeting than expected.

i) Recommendation:
Regardless of the success and impact of the OTI/Lebanon program, the evaluation team believes that the events of 1999—upon which the program was based—do not constitute OTI's usual standards for a significant political opening. Had OTI strictly applied its criteria for engagement, a program in Lebanon would never have been initiated. Instead, far more compelling political openings would have been the municipal or parliamentary elections or Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in May 2000.

However, while Lebanon did not fit the criteria, the OTI program did have an impact that would not have otherwise happened. Therefore, the USAID/Lebanon Mission Director recommends that OTI create a level of second tier countries. This would allow for programs in countries that are engaged in a smaller political transition, but could still benefit from OTI-style assistance.

ii) Lesson Learned:

> "It was a mistake to look at the short-term and not the long-term…you cannot plan a short-term intervention without looking at how it fits into society…if it was to be a sustainable effort, it should have been fit into a long-term process."
> Ghassan Moukheiber, Lawyer

The team believes that Lebanon is less in need of short-term assistance, as in the case of political transitions in which OTI quickly acts to help fill a power vacuum, and in greater need of a long-term development strategy. As has been amply noted, corruption within Lebanon is institutionalized and has been the accepted practice for decades.

ii) Recommendation:
Any anti-corruption activities that seek to remedy the situation cannot take a short-term approach. Rather, Lebanese, from both the highest political levels to grassroots organizations, must be involved in a phased process to combat corruption. While OTI played a very valuable role by igniting the first anti-corruption spark, the program needed to sustain these efforts over a longer timeframe. If OTI is to undertake anti-corruption activities in the future, it is important to ensure that the Mission is willing to consider a longer-term program. It is not feasible to address anti-corruption in a comprehensive manner during OTI's time frame.

D. Management Issues

i) Lesson Learned:
OTI could not have conducted its program in Lebanon without the extensive input and oversight by the Mission staff. Because OTI was unable to place its own staff permanently in-country, OTI relied on a series of trips by consultants and OTI staff in Washington. As successful as these trips were, the gaps between visits—specifically when the media campaign was being developed—required the Mission to remain actively involved from beginning to end. The Mission, which was already operating with a large portfolio of its own and experiencing severe staff limitations, noted that they had taken on an unusually heavy management burden during the media campaign phase. At times, they reported, they were over-extended and felt that OTI had not clearly defined the Mission's role and responsibilities.

ii) Recommendation:
The Mission strongly recommended that in the future an internal Memorandum of Understanding, clearly delineating roles and responsibilities, be signed between OTI and the Mission. In this way, the management burden can be thoroughly addressed at the outset.

E. Timing

i) Lesson Learned:
The Mission reported that the series of consultations made by both the media consultant and OTI staff over the course of the program were helpful overall in moving the program forward. However, the Mission reported that even with the series of visits there had been too many gaps and insufficient time devoted to the establishment of the program at the beginning.

ii) Recommendation:
For programs that do not have a full-time staff member in-country, OTI should develop a timeline or vision for the program that includes major activity bench marks and related staffing needs. OTI should further ensure that the program has sufficient staff resources at the critical start-up phase, and that these resources are in place until the program can progress more autonomously. To help keep the program on-track, OTI should consider hiring one consultant who will be available for consultations, both in the U.S. and in-country, over the life of the project.

F. Synergy among OTI-funded Activities and with the Mission

i) Lesson Learned:
In a small OTI program that is entirely focused on one objective, such as combating corruption in the case of Lebanon, it is important to reinforce the separate activities by building as much synergy as possible among the components. For example, while there were opportunities to reinforce the work of ICFJ, SUNY, and the media campaign, when this happened it was more by chance than by design. From the outset, the program was designed as four separate components. OTI could have increased its impact had it more actively created linkages and information flow between the different OTI-funded programs.

ii) Recommendation:
For example, the journalists working with ICFJ should have been informed of the work that the SUNY program was undertaking within different municipalities, or of the progress of the media campaign. Similarly, had the timing been different, the Amideast grant program could have reinforced both the media campaign and the SUNY component by giving citizens and local NGOs the opportunity to apply for funds to undertake concrete anti-corruption activities.

G. Incorporating Anti-corruption Activities into Future OTI Programs

Lebanon was a test-case for OTI to focus exclusively on anti-corruption activities. Although Lebanon was an atypical OTI country program for the reasons mentioned above, a number of generalizations can be made.

i) Lessons Learned:
Corruption exists in all countries in which OTI is active. The transition period is a critical point for developing anti-corruption initiatives that will set the stage for the development of long-term open and transparent practices. OTI's challenge is to target corruption appropriately given its two-year timeframe, and to ensure that there is adequate hand-off of these programs to the Mission or Democracy and Governance Center. Without a clear anti-corruption program hand-off, OTI's work will not take root within society and may even be undone.

Both SUNY's computerization program and the ICFJ alumni's idea of posting articles anonymously on the internet are two innovative examples of how information technology

can be used to fight corruption. OTI should continue to think of similarly innovative ways of using available technology to fight corruption.

H. The Mission's Assessment of OTI's Value-Added

USAID/Lebanon Mission Director Jon Breslar noted, "we would have missed a lot without the OTI programs. To be able to carry these forward is a tribute to the way it went…Without OTI, we would have been a lot further behind." In conversations between the evaluation team and the Mission it was clear that the Mission viewed the OTI program as a critical testing ground for future Mission activities. Through the OTI-funded anti-corruption activities, the Mission was able to implement programs that were outside of its strategic plan.

Had the Mission received its own funding for additional activities, they would not have broken new ground with anti-corruption activities, but would have instead put it towards its existing rural development programs. The Mission Director further stated, "the Mission was delighted that the OTI program was not a parallel track to the Mission's. It fit very well into with the Mission was doing, and we could assume ownership." As a result of the OTI-funded programs, the Mission is now planning to incorporate democracy activities into the new strategic plan that will be written over the summer.

Annex 1: List of Interviewees

Jon Breslar, USAID Mission Director
Lena Freij, USAID Program Management Specialist
Ghassan Jamous, USAID Program Assistance Specialist
Karen Hideko Sasahara, U.S. Embassy Political Officer
George Krimsky, ICFJ
Ghassan Khalil Bechara, ICFJ
Munir Khalil Nasser, ICFJ
Barbara Batlouni, Amideast
Zeina Akar, Information International
Jawad Adra, Information International
Nabil Mufarrej, Saatchi and Saatchi
Mahmoud Batlouni, SUNY Albany
Peter Salloum, SUNY Albany
Roula Ajouz, Beirut Municipal Council Member
Imad Beydoun, Beirut Municipal Council Member
Fadi Riachi, Creative Associates
Lina Makhzoumi Oueidat, Kulluna Massoul
Maja Salloum, Kulluna Massoul
Alexandre Schmidt, UN Center for International Crime Prevention
Jamil Mroue, Editor of the Daily Star
Ghassan Moukheiber, Attorney
Randa Antoun, American University of Beirut
Naela Muawad, Member of Parliament
Amal Karaki, CDR
Tewfik Mishlawi, ICFJ
Lana Abu-Teen, ICFJ
Hikmat Ek-Zein
Claudia Msharrafieh, Al Mustaqbal
Mariam Karouny, Al Shark
Wanda Williams, media expert
Nick Cox, former OTI Lebanon Program Manager
Doug Bell, State Lebanon Desk Officer

Annex 2: Scope of Work for the Impact Assessment

Timing: Mid-January or early February for a maximum of 14 days.

Team Composition: Two OTI/Washington staff and one local staff member.

Background: The OTI/Lebanon program began in September 1999 following the election of President Lahoud and his launch of a large-scale anti-corruption initiative. OTI's budget for FY99 was $1,081,080, and was $719,376 for FY 00. OTI's activities have served to reinforce President Lahoud's initiative by focusing on an anti-corruption media campaign, investigative journalism training, and municipal governance assistance. The current program is over half-way through and is scheduled to close one year after the small grants programs begins.

Impact Assessment: This assessment will accomplish two objectives: 1) determine the impact of OTI's corruption-related work to date, and 2) identify the future needs for the next phase of the Lebanon program. Specifically, the OTI team will:

- Interview the USAID Mission and grantees to determine the impact of the program to date.
- Identify the future direction of the small grants program and a strategy for targeting local groups.
- Identify the Mission's and grantees' monitoring/evaluation systems for determining impact and program targeting.
- Set baseline evaluation data for small grants program.
- Discuss program hand-off and exit strategy with the Mission and grantees.
- Provide lessons learned and best practices for OTI programs operating in non-presence countries.